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Theater Security Cooperation Plan with China: Enabling a Blue Water Dragon

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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23 April 2008

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ABSTRACT

China's massive increase in domestic defense spending and new emphasis on building a modern navy has great implications for the security and stability in Asia. China's Navy is still maturing and the longer it takes for China to gain a true blue water capability gives U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and other elements of United States national soft power time to influence current and future leaders in China to be more open and honest about their true intentions. To maintain stability, PACOM has an interest in retarding People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) modernization and professionalization. Yet at the same time, PACOM should engage with the PLAN where possible to build trust and relationships that can positively influence the trajectory of China's rise in directions favorable to the United States. This paper concludes that PACOM should not enter into a robust Theater Security Cooperation Plan with China, but it would be a major mistake to treat China as an enemy and stop all cooperation. Military cooperation with China should be limited to those activities that do not present the PRC with insights that enable the PLAN to mature at a quicker pace. PACOM's framework for cooperation should be based on minimizing the PLAN's attainment of sea power not in the hopes of gaining PRC transparency.

INTRODUCTION

China's massive increase in domestic defense spending and new emphasis on building a modern navy has great implications for security and stability in Asia. Since the late 1960's China has increased her naval forces that have the potential to either contribute to or greatly hinder the United States and its allies' goals of freedom, security and stability in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.¹ A Chinese blue water naval capability would greatly enhance Beijing's ability to "deny access" to Taiwan and/or other contested islands and strategic straits. The 2008 U.S. Defense Department annual report to Congress on China's military power states:

The international community has limited knowledge of the motivations, decision-making, and key capabilities supporting China's military modernization. China's leaders have yet to explain in detail the purposes and objectives of the PLA's modernizing military capabilities. For example, China continues to promulgate incomplete defense expenditure figures, and engage in actions that appear inconsistent with its declaratory policies. The lack of transparency in China's military and security affairs poses risks to stability by increasing the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation.²

The growth in numbers of modern warships in China's fleet is undeniable but numbers alone do not make a joint integrated navy. China's Navy is still maturing and the longer it takes for China to gain a true blue water capability provides U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and other elements of national soft power time to influence current and future leaders in China to be more open and honest about their true intentions.

PACOM's response to China's uneven transparency on its naval build-up will be critical to the security of the Western Pacific. To maintain stability, PACOM has an interest in retarding People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) modernization and professionalization.

¹ Bruce Swanson, *Eight Voyages of the Dragon* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 255.

² U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, Annual Report to Congress (Washington DC: US Department of Defense, 2008), I.

Yet at the same time, PACOM should engage with the PLAN where possible to build trust and relationships that can positively influence the trajectory of China's rise in directions favorable to the United States. This will require careful balancing of priorities by the PACOM staff. To ensure the U.S. Navy does not inadvertently help China attain a blue water capability, PACOM should limit Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP) with China. Any insight, lessons learned or direct observation of U.S. naval operations gained through cooperation would only quicken China's goal of a blue water navy. Military contact needs to be analyzed for the risk that the cooperation would be more beneficial to the PLAN than any related gain in transparency.

This paper examines how parts of a TSCP could enable China to increase its blue water capability without the benefit of truly knowing what China's goal of its military growth is. Some cooperation between PACOM and the PLAN is inevitable and desired. Due to the lack of transparency of their military expansion, an extremely careful and methodical approach to cooperation is needed to ensure United States and PACOM security goals are met in the Western Pacific.

COMPONENTS OF A TSCP

Before examining the risk of a TSCP with China, it is first necessary to discuss what a TSCP is and the capabilities needed to be a competent blue water navy. Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operations Planning, states six categories of security cooperation:³

- (1) Military contacts, including senior official visits, port visits, counterpart visits, conferences, staff talks, and personnel and unit exchange programs.
- (2) Nation assistance, including foreign internal defense, security assistance programs, and planned humanitarian and civic assistance activities.

³ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations Planning*, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 26 December 2006), I-3.

(3) Multinational training.

(4) Multinational exercises

(5) Multinational education for US personnel and personnel from other countries, both overseas and in the United States.

(6) Arms control and treaty monitoring activities

In the examination of the six categories of security cooperation with China, the cost or benefit to the United States will be analyzed.

BLUE WATER NAVY CAPABILITY

What abilities does the PLAN need to achieve to be a blue water navy? The United States maritime strategy lists six core capabilities required of a modern seapower: forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.⁴ To realize this capability the strategy offers three initiatives. The first is to improve integration and interoperability, the capability to work and contribute in a joint environment.⁵ Second is to “enhance awareness” establishing and improving capability in maritime domain awareness along with intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.⁶ Finally, “prepare our people” will involve training, exercises, enabling decision making at the lowest level and international exchanges.⁷ This paper will discuss how a robust cooperation plan could potentially lead to the PLAN attaining the above listed seapower core capabilities. As the PLAN works to improve their potential it is instructive to understand China’s lack of a modern maritime legacy and just how far they still need to go.

⁴ Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corp, and Commandant of the Coast Guard, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower,” (October 2007), 10-13.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, 14.

⁷ Ibid, 15.

CHINA'S LACK OF A MODERN MARITIME LEGACY

China's maritime history is surprisingly short on achievements. This lack of sea power has a direct effect on China's current anemic naval capability. The continental Confucianist mindset throughout China's modern history has until recently been in direct conflict with obtaining maritime prowess.⁸ Perhaps the most important Chinese historical maritime accomplishment was China's first naval fleet built during the fifteen century Ming dynasty under emperor Yongle.⁹ In *Eighth Voyage of the Dragon*, Bruce Swanson states, "To ensure the safety of Chinese traders on the sea and the uninterrupted flow of luxury items, it was essential that Yongle build a navy that would convince the ocean states of China's "world supremacy." Yongle devised a plan calling for the aggressive use of seapower to underline Chinese suzerainty over the peripheral southern ocean states."¹⁰ Yongle commissioned Eunuch Zheng He to lead seven overseas expeditions that traveled from modern Russia through the Strait of Malacca to the Persian Gulf and Horn of Africa. Zheng He lead a large force of hundreds of ships and over 27,000 men that saw some fighting to ensure tributary status was correctly conferred.¹¹ After the accomplishments of Zheng He, Chinese maritime accomplishments fizzled due to a continental focus of the military, multiple civil wars, and foreign intervention.¹²

The Chinese Navy was disestablished by Chiang Kai-shek in 1940 and was not rebuilt due to the war with Japan and the ongoing Chinese civil war.¹³ After Mao established the People's Republic of China (PRC), the PLAN was established on 23 April 1949.¹⁴ The

⁸ Bruce Swanson, *Eight Voyage of the Dragon*, 1.

⁹ Ibid, 39.

¹⁰ Ibid, 33.

¹¹ Ibid, 33-40.

¹² Ibid, 1, 53, 125.

¹³ Ibid, 166-167.

¹⁴ *China's Navy 2007* (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, 2007), 1.

PLAN, however, encountered many difficulties until its emergence in the late 1970's as an important part of the PRC's military modernization.¹⁵ This more modern growth highlights the PLAN's immaturity and lack of experience in comparison to contemporary blue water navies.

CHINA'S INTENTIONS?

Some modern Chinese point to Zheng He's voyages as an example of its peaceful use of seapower. China experts Holmes and Yoshihara explain:

To support Beijing's claim that it is pursuing a "peaceful rise" to great-power status, Chinese spokesmen accentuate the predominantly peaceful nature of Zheng He's endeavors. This helps assuage fears in Asian capitals of China's naval buildup, which in short order has produced a leap in combat power. "The essence of Zheng's voyages does not lie in how strong the Chinese navy once was," declared Xu Zuyuan, the Chinese government's vice minister for communication, "but in that China adhere[d] to peaceful diplomacy when it was a big power."¹⁶

Another expert Edward Dreyer, however, argues the counterpoint stating "that the purpose of the voyages was actually 'power projection' rather than mere exploration. Zheng He's voyages were undertaken to force the states of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to acknowledge the power and majesty of Ming China and its emperor."¹⁷ Although resolving this intellectual disagreement is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth emphasizing that China and the PLAN look back at Zheng He with pride and celebrate his accomplishments. One important question is which portrayal of Zheng He most accurately predicts China's future use of its growing seapower.

Without a clear understanding of the PRC's military goals it is informative to examine how China reacts to problems. Chinese historian Larry Wortzel observes, "In times

¹⁵ Bruce Swanson, *Eight Voyages of the Dragon*, 262-275.

¹⁶ James R Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, *Soft Power at Sea: Zheng He and Chinese Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute Proceedings, October 2006), 34-38.

¹⁷ Edward Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (Tappan NJ: Pearson Longman, 2006), xii.

of crisis or threat, Chinese leaders have tended to resort to force to create a political shock that reinforces an important principle, such as sovereignty. Part of the justification for Beijing's resort to force is often based on the perception perpetuated by the Chinese Communist Party that the period between 1840 and 1949 consisted of a "century of national humiliation" of China by foreign national powers."¹⁸ As China's seapower grows, a major concern for PACOM is, will the PRC use preemptive force to rise above the "century of national humiliation." The modernization and expansion of the PLAN is primarily to prevent Taiwan from splitting from China and secondarily in response to the ever growing Chinese's dependence on ocean commerce and the protection of their sea lines of communication.¹⁹ The protection of key strategic straits in the Pacific and Indian Oceans will necessitate a capability to operate beyond the range of land-based aircraft.²⁰ The PRC attainment of a blue water navy has more implications than just "access denial" to Taiwan.

CURRENT STATE OF THE PLAN

Chinese expert McVadon's assessment of the current state of the PLAN, "the PLAN has matured remarkably insofar as acquiring platforms and equipment (ships, submarines, aircraft, radars, and so on) and weapons (anti-ship cruise missiles, air defense missiles, torpedoes, and the like) is concerned, but this "new PLA Navy" has not matured fully in exercising its forces and developing the command and control capabilities, coordination means, and intelligence and targeting support needed to make the force fully operational."²¹ The PLAN is growing fast with capable platforms and weapons but does not possess all six

¹⁸ Larry M. Wortzel, "China's Foreign Conflicts since 1949," in *A Military History of China*, ed. David A. Graff et al. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), 270.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, Annual Report to Congress, 7-10.

²⁰ Eric McVadon, "China's Maturing Navy," *Naval War College Review* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 102.

²¹ Ibid, 94.

core capabilities of a modern seapower.

China's 2006 *Defense White Paper* states, "The Navy is endeavoring to build mobile maritime troops capable of conducting operations under conditions of informationization, and strengthen its overall capabilities of operations in costal waters, joint operations, and integrated maritime support. Efforts are being made to improve and reform training programs and methods to intensify training in joint maritime operations."²² To ensure current and future platforms are employed correctly China recognizes that it is imperative to properly train its personnel and provide realistic operational experience. "This amounts to a fundamental turn away from ideology towards the objective study of naval warfare – a trend that has been two decades in the making."²³ A viable method for China to enhance their naval power is to learn from the largest blue water navy in the world. The Japanese Navy in 1870 did just that by making a decree that their growing Navy would use the British Navy as a role model.²⁴ The Japanese invited the British in to train their officers and initially build their fleet.

As Japan learned from the British all aspects of building and fighting a navy it slowly gained the ability to create its own. Early on the Japanese Navy brought in foreign experts and sent naval officers abroad to speed the process of building a world class navy.²⁵ China's current military modernization is similar to the Japanese's Navy rise in the 1920's.²⁶ Current United States law forbids such an agreement for comprehensive cooperation that would help

²² *China's Navy 2007*, iii.

²³ Lyle Goldstein et al., "China Emerges as a Maritime Power," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 07 September 2004, http://www8.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jir/history/jir2004/jir01052.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=china%20emerges%20as%20a%20maritime%20power&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=JIR& (accessed 12 March 2008).

²⁴ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 11.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 510.

²⁶ Thomas G. Mahnken, "China's New Nuclear Fleet and the U.S. Navy," in *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force*, ed. Andrew S. Erickson et al. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 377.

the PLAN grow in capability like the British did for Japan. Yet, a robust theater security cooperation with China could provide similar access to observing U.S. Navy's tactics, techniques, and procedures in action.²⁷

Another critical piece in gaining this capability is building one or more operational aircraft carriers. PRC leaders are engaged in a vigorous debate concerning whether to build an aircraft carrier or continue to focus on submarines as the main part of their maritime strategy.²⁸ The addition of a carrier fleet would enhance Beijing's operational reach but the PLAN will be challenged to train their personnel to meet the complex requirements of operating away from home waters without the coverage of land based fighters and surface to air missile sites.

THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION

The first category of a TSCP is military contact. To understand Chinese intentions and help with transparency military contact is required but should be limited in scope. PACOM planners should limit military contacts with the Chinese to those that do not involve United States personnel operating at the operational and tactical levels. These exchanges should be limited to official visits and port calls that do not allow access to how the U.S. Navy trains or operates its ships, staffs, and joint exercises. Personnel or unit exchange programs can provide too much access to everyday naval operations at all levels.

One example of military contact is when the Japanese Navy in 1897 sent Lieutenant Akiyama to the United States for a two year officer exchange tour to observe American

²⁷ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, Public Law 106-065 (2000): 779-781. (accessed 3 April 2008), http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ065.106.

²⁸ Andrew S. Erickson and Andrew R. Wilson, "China's Aircraft Carrier Dilemma," in *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force*, ed. Andrew S. Erickson et al. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 231.

doctrine and technology in action.²⁹ He was denied access to the Naval War College and Annapolis but was able to be a foreign observer aboard a U.S. naval ship during the “blockade and destruction of the Spanish fleet at Santiago.”³⁰ LT Akiyama’s reports on his observations had a huge impact on professionalism in the Japanese Navy and his insights were instrumental in the progression of naval doctrine and tactics in the Japanese Navy.³¹ This is just one example of an officer exchange having a profound effect on his navy to the future detriment of the U.S. Navy. Extended military exchanges at the operational and tactical level for the PLAN could provide the same level of insight to blue water operations which is a risk not worth taking.

The PLAN is aggressively seeking foreign expertise on naval operations. Chinese experts Allen and McVadon in *China’s Foreign Military Relations* state, “Many of the changes the PLA has enacted have been the result of what it has learned about the nature of modern warfare through its exchanges. Over the past two decades, the PLA foreign relations have evolved as a means to advance China’s military modernization program in several ways.”³² The Chinese tenaciously use every opportunity to enhance their naval doctrine, tactics and training knowledge. How much cooperation is required that would offset their potential gain in military knowledge? An example of China benefitting from military contact is documented by Allen and McVadon:

All senior officers in China’s Air force have learned advanced military skills and been trained in management techniques by the air forces of a number of foreign countries from 1996 through 1998. The program was the first of its kind in the history of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force. Senior leaders believed it would broaden the minds of those sent abroad and encourage positive changes in

²⁹ David C. Evans, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, 70.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Kenneth W. Allen and Eric McVadon, *China’s Foreign Military Relations* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, October 1999), 6-7.

the way personnel are trained.³³

This training included the U.S. Air Force and today the PRC Air Force is a more modern and capable air force, arguably benefitting substantially from foreign exchange of its leaders and the assimilation of foreign tactics, doctrine, and technology.³⁴

Allen and McVadon also relate that, “Chinese military relations with the United States developed rapidly in the 1980s and included exchanges of high-level military officers and working-level delegations in training, logistics, and education. Military contact between the U.S. and China was on the increase in the 1980s as both worked together to counter the Soviet naval threat in the Pacific. The U.S. sold some weapons to China for defense purposes.”³⁵ One policy to combat Soviet naval ambitions in the Western Pacific was to cooperate with China by training and selling weapons to PRC forces. This military contact and cooperation continued until the Tiananmen Square crisis. To protest China's slaughter of demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, the United States embargoed the sale of military items to China and stopped cooperation activities.³⁶ Even after this embargo was in place China took delivery of modern avionics for its F-8 fighters and Mark 46 ship and helicopter launched anti-submarine torpedoes.³⁷ United States and allied submarines may in the future face Chinese torpedoes built with American technology because of past military cooperation.

The second category of TSCP is nation assistance which includes foreign internal defense, security assistance programs and humanitarian assistance activities. United States

³³ Ibid, 54.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 3.

³⁶ U.S. General Accounting Office, National Security and International Affairs Division, “GAO on U.S. and Euro Military Exports to China,” 16 June 1998, 6. <http://www.softwar.net/gao176.html> (accessed 28 March 2008).

³⁷ Ibid.

law restricts foreign internal defense and security assistance programs with China. Yet, humanitarian and civic assistance activities would give PACOM access to China. Although humanitarian assistance exercises would expose PLAN amphibious forces to training in command and control, the potential to save lives should override any opposing concerns.

Security cooperation also calls for multinational training. Training opportunities with the United States would give the PLAN more access to joint operations. As the 2006 Department of Defense report on China's military points out, "Although the PLA has devoted considerable effort to developing joint capabilities, it faces a persistent lack of inter-service cooperation and a lack of actual experience in joint operations."³⁸ The PLA understands its weaknesses and is actively working to improve their joint capabilities. One example of multinational training is when in 1998 the PLAN was invited to observe Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) multinational exercise which included 6 nations with more than 50 ships and 200 aircraft.³⁹ Thus, two PLAN representatives visited the carrier USS Nimitz, an AEGIS destroyer and cruiser, and a fleet command ship during the exercise.⁴⁰ The officers' report "reveals a high degree of surprise that high-technology weapons systems still require very dedicated, competent, and highly trained personnel."⁴¹ The officers got a first hand look at how the U.S. Navy operates in a complex joint environment and were able to pass lessons learned back to the PLAN.

Another part of a TSCP with China would be joint U.S. Navy and PLAN naval exercises that could provide another critical enabler for a Chinese blue water navy. Chinese

³⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress, Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2006* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), 16.

³⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, "Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 1998", <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=10364> (accessed 3 APR 2008).

⁴⁰ Kenneth W. Allen, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, 49.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

expert Allen states, “China’s navy is still failing to conduct exercises needed to develop its potential capability. However, the PLAN aspires to, and is erratically striving to conduct, training and exercises in more distant waters.”⁴² The Chinese realize the knowledge and training that can be gained from participating in multinational exercises. The PLAN in 2005 conducted a major naval exercise with the Russian Navy, a noteworthy difference from simple exercises completed with other major navies.⁴³ If PACOM planners desire to conduct exercises with China the potential cost of training the PLAN must not outweigh the benefit of increased cooperation and transparency.

Education for PLAN personnel in the United States constitutes another category of security cooperation. The U.S. Navy does benefit from its international partners participating in the International Military Education and Training programs. For example, International students at the Naval War College “develop skills in national security decision making, build strategy and policy analytical frameworks, and gain expertise in joint war-fighting doctrine.”⁴⁴ If this part of a TSCP with China was established the exchange would certainly provide PLAN officers the joint training they desire.

The last category in a security cooperation plan is arms control and treaty monitoring activities. Any activity in this category would be beneficial to both parties in ensuring all aspects of arms control and counter proliferation objectives were met. PACOM planners should make this an objective of their policy toward China even without a robust TSCP with China.

COUNTERARGUMENT

⁴² Eric McVadon, “China’s Maturing Navy,” 95.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Naval War College, Naval Command College, <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/academics/colleges/ncc/ncc.aspx> (accessed 3 April 2008).

Allen points out, “the PLAN also made an unprecedented voyage to Hawaii in 1989. PLAN officers still talk warmly of that port call as a superb example of how such exchanges can reduce misunderstanding and prevent miscalculations concerning the capabilities, attitudes, and intentions of another country.”⁴⁵ On the surface one can agree that more interaction and cooperation prevents miscalculation. Unfortunately, the inconsistent transparency and intent of China’s military growth and modernization suggests it is reckless to hope for more openness by giving China more access to the United States military. Without being able to ascertain Beijing’s true intentions it would be best to limit military-to-military contact to a minimum. Exceptions to this should be made after careful consideration of the risk.

Incorporating China into counter and anti-terrorism efforts would benefit the United States.⁴⁶ The inclusion of the PLAN into any Global War on Terror plan would necessitate Chinese access to useful intelligence and command and control systems. Yet access to timely intelligence and communication systems would allow China to better understand our abilities in maritime domain awareness along with other collection capabilities possibly allowing them to negatively exploit American systems. The necessity to restrict information and communication system from the PLAN negates the maritime resources China could contribute to the war on terror.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented concerning limiting security cooperation with China to ensure PACOM policy does not enable the PLAN to more rapidly acquire blue water navy capabilities:

⁴⁵ Kenneth W. Allen, *China’s Foreign Military Relations*, 48.

⁴⁶ Anthony Gilbert, “New Century, New Partners: Theater Security Cooperation with China” (Research Paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2007), 2.

- 1) Minimize all military contact at the working level when PACOM forces are training, operating at sea or in an exercise. This includes any access to command and control, intelligence, or joint exercises. In addition contact with Soldiers, Marines and Airmen could also provide the PLA with lessons on joint interoperability and integration therefore ought to be minimized.
- 2) Continue United States and China military cooperation in the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement.⁴⁷ This device “provides for operator level exchanges to discuss issues of maritime safety and communication.”⁴⁸ The agreement mirrors the successful Incidents at Sea talks between the U.S. Navy and the Soviet Navy which led to increased cooperation and understanding between the Super Powers during the Cold War.⁴⁹
- 3) Continue high level PACOM military officer and civilian exchanges to help foster cooperation and understanding. However, limit Chinese leadership exposure to U.S. naval platforms, technology, and operations.
- 4) Seek cooperation between U.S. non-Department of Defense agencies and China to facilitate PRC transparency. A great example is how China gave the Federal Bureau of Investigation permission to establish an office in Beijing to facilitate shipping container security inspections before leaving China for the United States.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Military Maritime Consultative Agreement,” <http://www.nti.org/db/china/engdocs/milmarag.htm>, (accessed 4 April 2008).

⁴⁸ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Military Maritime Consultative Agreement,” <http://www.nti.org/db/china/mmcaorg.htm>, (accessed 4 April 2008).

⁴⁹ David Winkler, *Cold War at Sea: High Seas Confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 174-175.

⁵⁰ Kenneth Lieberthal, “How Domestic Forces Shape the PRC’s Grand Strategy and International Impact,” in *Strategic Asia 2007-08, Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy*. ed. Ashley J. Tellis et al. (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research. 2007), 33.

- 5) Encourage China to increase its participation in the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office (ISMERLO).⁵¹ The benefit of saving Sailors lives overrides any benefit the PLAN may garner from this cooperation.
- 6) Create a PACOM working group to evaluate the risk of cooperation activities with China against apparent gains in openness. This group's purpose would be to develop a comprehensive matrix that could inform decisions on possible military to military contact. This cooperation matrix could also be used to objectively evaluate Chinese openness.

CONCLUSION

The manner in which China pursues military modernization, and how it emerges once such efforts mature, is not fully known. PACOM however, is in the position of being able to significantly influence China's trajectory through a limited TSCP. Ultimately an open and cooperative partnership with China would be a worthy goal. In the meantime China's military opacity requires US hedging. The interconnected American and Chinese economies mandate some level of mutual military comprehension and cooperation. China is aggressively pursuing a navy with blue water potential which it could soon project power and influence. United States and its allies' desire of security and stability could be threatened if the PRC attains this capability without our clear understanding of their intentions.

PACOM should not enter into a robust Theater Security Cooperation Plan with China, but it would be a major mistake to treat China as an enemy and stop all cooperation. Military cooperation with China should be limited to activities that do not present the PRC

⁵¹ Lyle Goldstein and William Murray, "International Submarine Rescue: A Constructive Role for China?" *Asia Policy*, Number 5 (January 2008), 182.

with insights which enable the PLAN to mature at a quicker pace. The agreement to set up a phone hotline between PACOM and China is a major step toward better understanding intentions when questions arise.⁵² But in contrast is ADM Keating's testimony to Congress:

While in discussion with a senior Chinese naval officer on our first visit, he with a straight face – so apparently seriously – proposed the following deal to me. He said: As we develop our aircraft carriers – an interesting note to begin with – why don't we reach an agreement, you and I. You take Hawaii east, we'll take Hawaii west. We'll share information and we'll save you all the trouble of deploying your naval forces west of Hawaii.⁵³

This statement highlights the potential problems of a blue water PLAN. Does China desire to create hegemony in the West Pacific? Delaying the power projection and sea control capabilities of the PLAN allows for more time to encourage transparency of its military goals and the strategic objectives of the PRC. The risk of full cooperation outweighs the potential benefit. PACOM's framework for cooperation should be based on minimizing the PLAN's attainment of sea power not in the hopes of gaining PRC transparency.

⁵² Walter Pincus, "Pentagon Report Plays down Chinese Military Threat," Washingtonpost.com, 10 March 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/09/AR2008030901741.html> (accessed 6 April 2008).

⁵³ Senate, *Senate Armed Services Holds Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget for U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces-Korea*, 110th Cong, 2nd sess., 2008.

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